

To Whom It May Concern,

Molen Reef in Eastern Utah represents one of the most fossil rich areas in North America. The area is home to some of the highest concentrations of the extinct fern *Tempskya* (Tidwell and Hebbert 1992), Cretaceous fossil woods including the type specimens for the described genera *Mesembrioxylon stokesi*, *Paraphyllanthoxylon utahense*, *Ilacinoxylon pitttense*, *Palaeopiceoxylon thinosus*, (Thayn and Tidwell 1984, Thayn, Tidwell and Stokes 1983, Tidwell and Thayn 1985), the type locality for *Astralopteris* (Tidwell, Rushforth and Reveal 1967), the locality for extremely rare Cretaceous platanoid fossil flowers (Tidwell and Hebbert 1992), the type specimens for *Xenoxylon moorei* (Tidwell, Britt and Ash 1998), and the type specimens for the Jurassic fern *Osmundacaulis lemonii* (Tidwell 1990). The region contains an incredibly diverse and rich fossil plant flora which is still being researched and catalogued, and should not be opened for drilling and mineral exploration. If the parcels are leased then a qualified paleontologist familiar with BOTH botany and vertebrate paleontology should conduct comprehensive pre-construction surveys, and be on hand as a field monitor during all phases of construction. This area is a critical location in the study of Cretaceous paleontology, paleobotany, and palynology and the lack of a complete paleontological impact study within this scoping document is a stunning oversight.

Leith Tidwell, M.S.
paleoleithic@yahoo.com

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